

Revera Inc. launches Expert Advisory Panel report on first wave of COVID-19

Findings identify high community spread, lack of surveillance testing as key drivers of outbreaks

TORONTO, December 7, 2020 – Revera Inc., a leading owner, operator, developer and investor in the senior living sector, today announced the launch of its Expert Advisory Panel’s report entitled: [*Perfect Storm: The COVID-19 Experience for Revera and the Long Term Care Sector.*](#)

Earlier this year, Revera engaged a panel of external experts with global experience in a range of relevant fields to review Revera’s experience with Covid-19 from March to September. The mandate of the panel was to identify practical and actionable opportunities for improvement and develop implementable best practices. All of the pertinent data the company had gathered during timewave 1 as well as the background and history of the organization’s response to COVID-19 was provided to these experts as was final editorial control for the contents of the report.

“Revera was especially focused on gaining insights that could help them prepare for future pandemics, including future waves of COVID-19, and shared all relevant data with us,” said Dr. Bob Bell, Chair of the Expert Advisory Panel. “They gave us full editorial control and have already implemented many of our recommendations and are in the process of implementing others.”

According to Dr. Bell, the Expert Advisory Panel’s key findings fall into four broad categories:

Community prevalence is a key driver of infection rates in long term care:

- The panel’s research confirmed that the main risk factor for COVID-19 entering seniors homes was the prevalence of the virus in the communities in which Revera staff lived. COVID-19 often is spread by asymptomatic people in the early stages of the illness. Sometimes, infected and infectious people may have no symptoms throughout the course of their illness. Unfortunately, infection was carried into long term care homes by well-meaning staff who had no idea that they were infectious.

Surveillance testing introduced in Ontario should be adopted by other provinces:

- In order to reduce the risk of the virus getting into long term care homes, regular, proactive testing of asymptomatic staff and visitors is essential. Once testing of staff began in Ontario in late May, small outbreaks were detected earlier and the risk of major outbreaks in our homes was markedly reduced. In provinces that have chosen not to invest in surveillance testing, Revera is undertaking this responsibility, and has contracted a private testing agency to test staff and residents. Revera is also piloting complementary rapid point of care antigen testing.

Building design is key, and governments need to accelerate the redevelopment of aging long-term care infrastructure:

- Once the virus entered long term care homes, the risk of it spreading depended, in part, on the age of the residence. Older homes, especially in Ontario which had ward rooms with up to four residents sharing, were especially at risk for the disease spreading between residents.
- Revera owns 32 homes in Ontario that had multi-resident rooms. The company applied to redevelop these homes years ago and we are pleased that the government has approved moving forward with construction of three new homes. As a result of the pandemic experience, Revera intends to work with local health authorities to ensure that only two residents are allowed in any room until redevelopment is completed, and will install Plexiglas separators to enhance safety to enhance safety.

Governments and operators need to address the long-standing staffing challenges that were exacerbated by the pandemic

- During wave one of the pandemic, long term care staff were stressed and frightened but in most cases were able to continue providing excellent care to their residents. Some staff became ill and some needed to isolate because of contact with an infected individual. Revera, and the sector as a whole, faced staffing shortages, especially related to Personal Support Workers. During the pandemic, in long term care homes with large outbreaks, staffing became even more challenging as a result of required staff absences due to self-isolation. Even after the pandemic is over, the long term care sector and the ministries of health that set funding levels for staffing, must focus on solutions to increase staffing levels and attract and train new care providers.

“The first wave of COVID-19 in the long term care sector broke our hearts, but steeled our will,” said Tom Wellner, president and chief executive officer of Revera. “All of Revera united behind our pandemic response plan with a singular goal: to analyze our collective experiences and implement changes quickly in advance of the second wave.” Revera has not only already implemented many of the expert panel’s recommendations, but has also shared many of these suggestions with other participants in the industry, including providing our thoughts during Revera’s testimony at the Ontario Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission.

“Today’s report launch is dedicated to the men and women who work in the senior living sector, and those who live in congregate settings in Canada. I am very proud of the people who work at Revera, and all who choose to work in our sector, for their heroic efforts during this global pandemic,” added Mr. Wellner.

“We know much more now than we did when the virus first arrived in Canada,” said Dr. Rhonda Collins, chief medical officer for Revera. “We are grateful for the excellent work of this panel of esteemed experts, and to Dr. Bell for his leadership chairing the group. Their insights have helped us as we manage through the second wave of COVID-19.”

To ensure the report findings and recommendations were written in a way that made the panel’s findings accessible to the public, Revera employees, residents and their families, the company engaged



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a noted health writer to draft the report based on the consultations with the experts. Dr. Bell, in his role as Chair of the Expert Advisory Panel, retained final editorial control, working directly with the writer to finalize the report.

External Advisory Panel

Special thanks to our expert advisory panel for their hard work and insights. Members of the panel contributed their advice and recommendations on a voluntary basis:

- **Dr. Bob Bell, Chair**, Former Ontario Deputy Minister of Health and former President and CEO of University Health Network. Bob agreed to participate in and chair this advisory committee on a voluntary basis. Revera agreed that Dr. Bell will have final editorial approval of the committee's report.
- **Dr. Diana Anderson**, Healthcare architect and board-certified internist, DoChitect
- **Bob Bass**, Bass Associates Professional Corporation
- **Dr. Vivek Goel**, Vice President, Research and Innovation at the University of Toronto; Founding President and CEO, Public Health Ontario
- **Santiago Kunzle**, Director & Principal, Montgomery Sisam Architects Inc.
- **Dr. Mark Loeb**, Professor, Departments of Pathology and Molecular Medicine and Health Research Methods, Evidence, and Impact, McMaster University
- **Dr. Allison McGeer**, Professor, Departments of Laboratory Medicine and Pathobiology and Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto
- **Michael Nicin**, Executive Director, National Institute on Ageing, Ryerson University
- **Dr. Krystyna Ostrowska**, Medical Microbiologist/Infectious Disease Specialist, Trillium Health Partners and LifeLabs, and Lecturer, University of Toronto
- **Dr. Samir Sinha**, Director of Geriatrics, Sinai Health System and the University Health Network; Director of Health Policy Research, National Institute on Ageing, Ryerson University

About Revera

Revera is a leading Canadian-owned and -headquartered, owner, investor, developer and operator in the senior living sector. Through its portfolio of partnerships, Revera owns or operates more than 500 properties across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom serving more than 55,000 seniors. The company offers seniors' apartments, independent living, assisted living, memory care, and long term care. With approximately 50,000 employees dedicated to providing exceptional care and service, Revera is helping seniors live life to the fullest. Through Age is More, Revera is committed to challenging ageism, the company's social cause of choice. Find out more at ReveraLiving.com, Facebook.com/ReveraInc or on Twitter [@Revera_Inc](https://twitter.com/Revera_Inc).

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